


Posted by u/ainsleyeadams **Alien Scum** 5 months ago 

Don't Worry About the Humans, Worry About Their Guardians

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Inspired by [this comment](#).

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Don't worry about the humans. Worry about their guardians. The creatures that stalk the night around them, that bare their fangs and claws when you get near the humans, that threaten even when they're far away. I met one on my first trip to the planet; I was sent to stand as a diplomat from my home planet, Twen. We'd had friendly relations with the humans through the Intergalactic Council, but the Head of State thought it best for us to establish contact personally. I was the poor sap chosen for the venture. It'll be fun, they said; it'll be exciting, they said! Well, they were very, very wrong.

It started in a park, while I was walking with my human guide, a young woman named Nina. We were rounding a bend when I saw them: the fearsome creatures that were rolling in the dirt. Thank god the humans had them caged by a giant fence, but the humans mingled with them! They threw spheres for them, cheered them on as they tumbled on the ground together.

Perhaps I am not painting a vivid enough picture: these are quadrupeds with sharp claws and sharp teeth; their spit, I have heard, can carry enough disease to kill a small planet (although that's shirking how bad humans saliva is—which is to say, worst, somehow). They have fur of varying lengths and colors and neither of those things denote temperament. Their size, too, acts as a decoy. It was the smallest ones that lunged the furthest, bit the hardest, yelped the loudest. Yet the large ones scared me, too.

Their muscles worked in beautiful patterns, but they were patterns of destruction as they tore apart the spheres the humans threw for them, the tiny simulacrum of other animals that they tore the white fluff out of with wild abandon. And their howls. Their yelps. Their barks. Oh! They were terrifying. They sent shivers down my spine. To think, humans kept these beasts within their homes, near their children! And the children! They played with them too, rolling as the beasts did, upon the ground.

I stood, shaking and watching them as my companion touched my arm, causing me to jump.

"You okay, Tourin?" She asked me.

"What are those wretched things?"

"The children?"

"No, the four-legged beasts."

"Dogs," she said, laughing.

"Dogs," I spat the word out of my mouth. What an apt, striking name, same as those jaws, same as those claws, same as those beady, dark eyes.

"They're pets."

"Pets? Those are predators."

"They're sweet, Tourin. Don't you have pets?"

"Yes, but they're harmless."

"Dogs are harmless, mostly."

"Mostly?"

But her answer of a shrug did nothing to satisfy me. I flinched away from them as we passed them on the walkway during our stroll; the humans held them with pitiful lengths of rope. The "dogs" tried to approach me, smell me, probably to catch my scent, and then find me later when I was defenseless, asleep, vulnerable, any combination of the three. I did not trust the dogs at all. And then I met their other creatures.

Nina thought it would be "fun" to go to a pet store. I obliged her. Upon entering, I almost fainted at the sight. Lining the walls, every square inch, were various sizes of predators, all ready to hurt, maim, and kill in various ways. That these could be pets! What an assault on sensibilities it was!

"These are parrots," Nina said, bringing me to the cages that housed "birds," winged creatures with sharp beaks and sharper claws.

One of them whistled to me, "Hello," it said, its tone incredibly human-like. I recoiled.

"They use mimicry to lure their prey in? Ingenious and horrifying all at once," I said, gazing at the bird; it gazed back. I felt seen.

Nina was stifling her laughter, "They're not predators."

I turned to her, flabbergasted, "You cannot tell me that beak is meant for anything but ripping into flesh."

"To break open things," she said. She reached out and pet the bird. I almost grabbed her hand, but then I would have been within biting range, and I didn't dare get that close. The beast spared her, for now. I would have to be extraordinarily vigilant now that I

knew they had predators of the sky that could mimic their voices. What a terrifying thing that was to think, that I could be strolling along, thinking I was walking toward a human when wham! That beak hit me, those claws grasped my shoulder, tearing into my delicate skin. The idea made me want to faint, but Nina had more to show me.

"These are puppies," she said, pointing to the tiny dogs. She picked one up, kissing it between the shoulder blades as it squirmed.

"How can you handle the young with such incredible disregard for safety? Won't their mother be around? Ready to defend her babe?"

"Their moms aren't here. Also, they barely have teeth," she said. To demonstrate, she put her hand into the dog's mouth. It chewed on her fingers for a moment before growing bored. When she removed her hand, much to my surprise, there was not blood, no viscera, no gore. It seemed fine. She thrust the dog to me and I backpedaled, narrowly avoiding the cage of the parrot.

"Oh come on, now," she said, "it won't hurt you."

"We don't have a good analysis of what the life on Earth could pass on to us, in terms of disease."

"They've all got a clean bill of health, otherwise they wouldn't be sold."

I reached my hand out, every muscle in my body shaking. I touched the fur of the animal, my eyes shut tight. I felt a wet appendage move along my fingers. I cracked an eye open. It was licking me! I squinted at it. What sort of tactic was this? Did it mean to lure me into a false sense of security so that it could then strike at me, tearing into me? Feasting upon my delicate body? But it just continued to lick my fingers, apparently thrilled by the taste. Its tail wagged vigorously.

"Aw," Nina said, "he likes you. Do you want to try holding him?"

"You are positive that he will not harm me?"

"He might pee on you, but no, he won't hurt you."

"Ahah! So that's it. They release poison from their bladder, do they?"

"It's just ammonia and water."

"Ammonia! Are you insane?" I said. I tried to retreat further, but the whistle of the parrot reminded me of the small confines of the shop.

She shrugged, "Suit yourself." She put the dog back, "You should meet the cats." She brought me to a back room where tiny predators roamed, stalking between man-made structures. They swatted and batted at different "toys," as Nina called them.

"You want them to hunt?"

"No, it keeps them entertained."

"Just as I thought," I said, bristling as one brushed against my leg.

"What?" She was holding one in her arms, cooing at it. It vibrated violently.

"They still have intense predatory compulsions. I cannot believe you keep these in your homes. You're asking for death!"

"You're too worried," she said, grabbing the cat beneath its front legs and moving it around as if it were performing a death rite dance. I had to look away from the severe omen. Another one brushed past me. I ejected irritants from my breathing cavity. Nina looked at me, worried, "Are you allergic?"

"What?"

"Allergic, like do you have a reaction to cats?"

"I—how would I know?"

She put the cat down and looked at my eyes, then got me to open my breathing cavity, "Oh, yep, looks like you're allergic, let's get you out of here. Maybe fish are more your speed."

I left, still having to eject irritants from the cavity, my eyes beginning to produce unnecessary liquid. Really, I could not believe these humans kept tiny predators that could also cause severe bodily reactions within them. Did they have a death wish? Were they just always dancing a death rite dance? Always courting the abyss? Thankfully, she was right. I enjoyed the fish.

"Ah, yes, this is much more like what we have."

"You just kind of feed 'em and watch 'em. I'm not a fish person myself, but some people go nuts over them. They'll have like, entire ecosystems in their homes."

"What?"

"Yeah, like big fish that'll eat the smaller fish, fully functioning tiny worlds."

"Oh, oh, no."

"What now?"

"Just as I thought."

"Spit it out, Tourin."

"Well, it seems that these creatures have evolved to control humans. Why else would they slave over something that gave them little to no benefit?" I got close to the "tank" and peered in. "Hm, it must be some sort of psionic. Thankfully, I don't think it affects all of you, or myself. Xanthar bless, I would hate to be beholden to a tiny creature such as that."

"You really are something," Nina said with a laugh, "do you want to meet the snakes?"

And that was the worst of them. They were long, legless creatures with fangs! Not fangs like the dogs, but very sharp, very thin fangs. I watched as a worker fed a live mouse to one of them. The snake ate it in one swallow. I turned to Nina, the liquid having left my face, my usual green pallor a sickly yellow.

"How?"

"Hm?"

"How can someone keep something like that in their home? Do they not grow? Could they not consume larger and larger animals as time goes on?" I took a deep breath, my eyes widening, "Could they not consume a human? Kill them? Incapacitate them?"

"One hundred percent," she said, smiling, "but snake people are weird like that."

We left the pet shop after that; I need to get some air, something to drink, to eat. I needed reassurance that humans weren't entirely driving themselves to death, but I have found no solace. Please, do not worry about the humans, they are not your biggest threat. The biggest threats are their companions, so wild, so varied, to incredible are they. Do not go to Earth without first learning of the many ways they can hurt, maim, and kill, or else you may find yourself falling victim to one of their many tortures.

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One of my first real "HFY" pieces, tbh. It was fun, although not my normal pace. Hope you enjoy it!

You can find all of my HFY/HFN work [here](#), and my other stories [here](#).